BUTTE
FALLS

THE PROSPECT AREA BETWEEN 1870 AND 1920

BY

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PREFACE

The subject of this paper concerns the local history of a small town in Jackson County. This town first called Deskins, had its beginnings in the early 1870's and consisted of nothing more than a mill owned by Slosson and Beeson and two stables. In 1870, Harvey P. Deskins arrived on the scene and being an energetic little man, purchased the mill, established the post office and attached his name to the settlement.

From this point on the settlement grew in population. Related within this paper is factual information concerning those first early settlers in Prospect, excluding Mr. Deskins, and the business and establishments that were the result of their many efforts.

I wish to thank the Prospect High School for permitting me to examine and use historical records from the files.

BOOTHBY

The family first came to Deskins in 1874, and settled near the present site of the dam. In 1882, they built a new home in the vicinity. The same year their oldest son, Ed, was born, the bridge crossing the river washed away leaving the families isolated.

At this time the Boothbys moved along the banks of Mill creek and built another home, They lived there until the year of 1882, wereupon they moved to Ashland.[1]

In 1889, the Boothbys returned to Prospect and their Mill Creek home. Many of the travelers who attempted the strenuous trip from Medford to Prospect would stay overnite at Mrs. Boothbys home. The home was not large enough for all the many people who needed accomodations. It was then that the idea arose for a hotel and preparations for the present hotel were begun.

The hotel was built in 1892 from material sawed in the local mill, with the school teacher, Mr. Pattee, helping with the project itself. The building appears much the same today except for additions and porches that are the result of later managers whims. The original 24" clear sugar pine sheeting is in the building today.[2]

The Boothby family left Prospect in 1897 for Fort Klamath. During their stay in Fort Klamath their daughter Maude met and married Chauncey F. Arant.

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1 C. Burrill and others, History and legends of Prospect, (Prospect, 1958) p. 4

2 Ibid.. p 4-5

The rest of the Boothby family moved to California where they resided until 1916. By 1916 the family had returned to the Upper Rogue country and the old home site where they live today.

NYE

In 1850, Chauncey Nye came across the plains to California. He and his brother Nathan then went to Jacksonville to work in the mines.[1]

The year 1853, found Chauncey Nye serving on the first Oregon Legislature with John F. Miller and G. N. Ambrose all representing Jackson County.[2]

Until this time Mr. Nye had not been familiar with the Upper Rogue Country. It was on October 21,1862, that Chauncey Nye, along with several other prospectors, climbed the present Union Peak. Due to their Civil War affiliations they named this peak according to their patriotic feelings. It was while they were on this particular expedition that they also re-discovered Crater Lake.[3]

The objective of their trip was not to explore these scenic sites but rather to locate a suitable road from the John Day mines to Jacksonville. They were successful in locating a suitable site. The original road is now in use as the Diamond Lake highway although some parts have been rerouted. This road went by Diamond Lake, through to Beaver Marsh and on to the John Day Country.

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1 C. Burrill and others, History and Legends of Prospect, (Prospect, 1958) p. 8

2 Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, (1901) v. 2, p. 5

3 Ibid., (1927) v. 28, p 193

The late Emery Nye and Waldo Nye owned some of the original homestead.

Five children were born to the Nelson Nye family and many still live in the area. Emery and Waldo are two of those children. Irene Nye married Stanley Jantzer, Waldo married Alice Kos, Marion Nye, Hope Nye who married Dee Hedgepeth and the late Emery Nye make up the descendents of Chauncey Nye. Their children will comprise another generation.

SQUIRE STANFORD AIKEN

Squire Stanford Aiken with his wife and small son, George Henry, came from New Hampshire to Jacksonville in 1883 where he established a general merchandise store.[1] In a small handbook of that day is found the following words relating to this business endeavor. "We have been able to supply just what all have been wishing for, a store where goods can be bought in large quantities at wholesale prices and in small quantities at lowest living prices. What we claim no one can deny, that we were the first in Jacksonville to give exact change and that we are the only firm that ever has offered honest goods at San Francisco prices, and still claim to make a profit."[2]

It might be said regarding this business that Mr. Aiken introduced the nickle as the medium of exchange, the dime hitherto being the lowest denomination used. In the corner stone of the first court house in Jackson County, which was constructed soon after his arrival in Oregon rests one of the pioneer nickels.[3]

Mr. Aiken and his brother Dr. Aiken became interested in the timber development of the Upper Rogue region. With this interest and a long time desire to own a stock ranch Mr. Aiken

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1 C. Burrill and others, History and Legends of Prospect, (Prostpect, 1958) p. 11

2 Early History of the Upper Rogue, unpublished data on file in Prospect High School office, p. U.N.

3 C. Burrill, p. 11

sold his business in Jacksonville to J. W. Merritt in the latter part of 1883 and moved his family to Deskins. Deskins was little more than a lumber and tie camp on the bunk of the Rogue River. Mr. Aiken and his brother homesteaded some land in the Red Blanket area and raised stock and hay on it.[4]

Mr. Aiken opened a small store at Deskins which was patronized by the local homesteaders. He changed the name of Deskins to Prospect on November 9, 1889 because he felt the future of the community was an optomistic one.[5] He became the first postmaster and would receive mail once a week if the weather permitted. The store and post office was situated at the corner of the present Crater Lake Highway and the Butte Falls cutoff through Red Blanket.

The Aiken family alternated their time between the home in town and the one on the Red Blanket Ranch. Their daughter, the first little girl born in the town of Prospect, was named Frances Imogene. Three years later a son Harry was born during on of the family sojourns at Red Blanket. Another son, Stanford was born four years after this.

Much credit is due to Mr. Aiken for the manner in which he cared for his familly and still had time for civic duties. "Good school and Good roads", was his slogan at a time when little attention was given to either. Mr. Aiken died in 1920 after a well spent life.[6]

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4 Early History of the Upper Rogue, p. u.n.

5 Lewis A. McArthen, Oregon Geographic Names (Eugene, 1928), p. 289

6 Early History of the Upper Rogue, p. u.n.

HOLLENBECK

George Hollenbeck came across the plains in 1864 with his parents, B. Quicy and Melinda. The family settled in Pit River, California two years later. George learned the language and customs of the Piute Indians who lived near his home. This early association with the Indians probably helped him the most in learning how to break horses. By 1864 his main work consisted of horse breaking in both Shasta County and the Rogue River Valley.[1]

Four years following the winter George spent in the Rogue Valley he married Martha Stanley. The following children were born to them: Ed, Pearl, May Belle and Ace.

George carried mail between Sams Valley and prospect for 16 years after which he moved to the Prospect area. The Hollenbecks managed the hotel from 1884 until the arrival of the Grieve's in 1912.[2]

Ed Hollenbeck married Dotha Crosby in 1894. They had one son named Ernest. In 1901, Dotha died and Ed returned to Prospect from the Burns area where they had been living. It was while Ed was in Prospect that he met and married Lizzie Phipps. They had two sons, Floyd and Jack. Floyd was drowned in the Rogue River and Jack later married Nina Goode, a girl from the Prospect area.[3]

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1 C. Burrill and others, History and Legends of Prospect, (Prospect, 1958) p. 18

2 Ibid., p. 18

3 Ibid., p. 18

GRIEVE

John and Maggie Bruce Grieve had made their home in Lakeport, California prior to their journey to Southern Oregon in the Spring of 1890. The family settled in the vicinity of Lake Creek on the banks of the Little Butte Creek. The family consisted of four sons and two daughters. The daughters, who were married, did not accompany them to Oregon. The youngest son was born October 22, 1889, and naturally made the trip.[1]

John Grieve acquired the Lake Creek Post Office and had the contract to carry mail across the Obenchain mountain by horseback to Butte Falls. They remained in Lake Creek until Maggie passed away in December of 1893.[2] An older sister, Ella Harriet, took care of the children after the death of their mother.

John Grieve then moved to Prospect in 1900, as the road supervisor on the John Day Road.[3]

William Grieve and his wife Kate moved to Prospect in July of 1900. They homesteaded what was then known as the Scoccum Ranch but is now called the Ulrich Ranch.

Before their marriage Kate was a school teacher. She taught school at the old Daily Place where the large Medco Pond is now located on the Prospect - Butte Falls road. While

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1 C. Burrill and others, History and Legends of Prospect, (Prospect, 1958), p. 15

2 Ibid., p. 16

3 Ibid., p. 16

teaching she boarded at the Geppart Ranch, the name being later changed to the Mil Mar Ranch.

The Grieve family had three children Etta, John and Bruce.

In 1908, William was elected county assessor and served in this office for 8 years. From 1916 until his death in 1934, he was employed by the Rogue River Timber Company.[4]

A few years before his death, Mr. Grieve built houses on the Katidid Ranch and moved into them. After Mr. Grieve's death, Kate continued to live on the ranch until she passed away in 1950. The ranch is now owned and operated by the Elk Lumber Company of Medford.

On May 10, 1912, the James E Grieve family arrived at Prospect from Central Point. James E. had originally lived in Nebraska. He married a Central Point girl by the name of Mary Plankey. They had one son, James H.[5]

After their arrival from Central Point, James E. took over the post office and was postmaster until his death in 1932. His wife, Mary then assumed his duties until her retirement in 1952.

James Heston, their son, became postmaster in 1953 and is still the postmaster. H eston married Margaret Cauller from Illinois.[6]

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4 Ibid., p. 16

5 Ibid., p. 17

6 Ibid., p. 17

POST OFFICE

In July of 1882, a post office was established by Captain Deskins, for which the town had been named.[1] It was in 1889, that S. S. Aiken changed the name of Deskins to Prospect and became its first postmaster. The post office was first located in Mr. Aikens store on the corner of the Butte Falls and Crater Lake highway. The mail was delivered once a week if weather and roads permitted.[2]

In May of 1912, James E Grieve arrived in Prospect and assumed the dties of postmaster. In 1917, the post office was moved to a new location in the Prospect Store. Mr. Grieve held the position until his death in 1932. At this time his wife Mary became the postmistress. She retired the position in 1952.[3]

Mrs. Helen H ubbard was acting postmistress during 1952 - 1953. At the end of Mrs. Hubbards year, Mr. James H. Grieve, son of James E. and Mary, became the postmaster and is still serving in that capacity.[4]

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1 C. Burrill and others, History and Legends of Prospect, (Prospect, 1958) p. 3

2 Ibid., p. 27

3 Ibid., p. 27

4 Ibid., p. 27

PROSPECT STORE AND HOTEL

Squire S. Aiken opened the first small store for the homesteaders in 1889. He had his home and store situated on the corner of what is now the Butte Falls and Crater Lake highway. This store also housed the first post office.[1]

In 1912, the James E. Grieve family arrived from Central Point and acquired the business of the store and hotel.[2] Mrs. George Hollenbeck had been managing the hotel prior to their arrival. The hotel been built in 1892 by the Boothbys, of lumber from the local mill. Each piece was finished by hand labor and ingenius pioneer inventions. The hotel was completed by the Ray Electric Water Power Company.[3]

By 1913, James E. Grieve had decided to tear down the store and build a new one which now stands in operation. James and Mary Grieve operated the store, Post office and hotel until his death in 1932.[4] In 1952, their son James H. Grieve took over the entire business his mother had been handling since his father's death.

Since that time the store has changed hands many times.

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1 C. Burrill and others, History and Legends of Prospect, (Prospect, 1958) p. 12

2 Ibid., p. 17

3 Ibid., p. 5

4 Ibid., p. 17

SCHOOLS

The need for an established school was soon felt by the homesteaders. The first classes were held in one of the early homes located near the dam site..

In 1890, A. H. Boothby made a land grant of 1 acre to be used for school purposes.[1] The property was deeded for the first school September 3, 1892 at a cost of two dollars and fifty cents.[2]

The local mill furnished lumber for the school and the community helped in building it. The desks were all made by hand out of sugar pie. A local resident, Mrs. Frances Aiken Pearson, still has in her possesion one of the original desks.[3] This building is now the annex of the Nazarene Church used as a Sunday school unit today.

The first teacher was Dora Fleming. Following her in 1890 was Charles Patte, a dapper Frenchman who ruled with a strong arm.[4]

Edna Gibson took the duties as teacher in 1891 while in April of 1892 Jennie Lynville arrived. The first terms of school lasted for a three month duration and took place during the Spring when roads were dry enought to permit the children to walk to school.[5]

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1 C. Burrill and others, History and Legends of Prospect, (Prospect, 1958), p. 6
2 Ibid., p. 28
3 Ibid., p. 6
4 Ibid., p. 28
5 Ibid., p. 28

Teachers wages were small but the teachers managed to survive by boarding around the community with the various families.

The present grade school was built in 1910 and the grade school gym was erected in 1925, consisting of only a pole building with a shake roof. The floor was dirt.[6]

Construction for the high school began in 1937 and was ready for classis in 1938. The high school and grade school shared symnasium priveleges until 1954 when a large new gym and shop was built for the high school.[7]

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6 Ibid., p. 28

7 Ibid., p. 29

ROADS

Roads in the Prospect area were indeed a problem. The route from Jacksonville to Prospect was a rugged trip taking five days to complete. Several of the homesteaders woud go to Jacksonville and congregate for the return trip. In that day and age no one had heard of grading and if a hill or mountain appeared in the way of the traveler he would go over the top instead of looking for a way around or through. Consequently the returning groups cooperated in pulling the heavily loaded wagons across by combining the teams.[1]

This road was known as the old Fort Road and began its winding course in Jacksonville, reaching the end at Fort Klamath. The road was mainly a military road and was kept for this purpose.

It was used to transport troops to Fort Klamath and the Indian reservations. However, the settlers in the area benefited greatly from its existence. The old road ran north of the present Crater Lake highway crossing in fromt of the present forebay and coming out at the present Rogue River bridge crossing at Prospect.[2]

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1 C. Burrill and others, History and Legends of Prospect,

2 Ibid., p. 15

In 1900, John Grieve came in to the area from Lake Creek to serve as road supervisor for the building of the John Day road.[3] This road went from Union Creek, around Diamond Lake, through Beaver Marsh, to John Day. This road was also used for military purposes.[4]

Labor for the John Day road was provided for a while by convicts from the state prison. John Grieve was the first man to use such men for this type of labor. He also used them later when he supervised the building of State Highway 62.[5]

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3 Ibid., p. 16

4 Ibid., p. 15

5 Ibid., p. 16

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